

# DISCONTENT

"MOTHER OF PROGRESS"

Entered at the Postoffice at Home, Wash., as Second Class Matter.

VOL. IV. NO. 8.

HOME, WASH., WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 6, 1901.

WHOLE NO. 164.

## THE COMSTOCK LAW.

Under the specious plea of necessary protection to the public morals, the liberty of the press in this country has been insidiously invaded, during the past thirty years, by a postal censorship which is proceeding to lengths almost incredible to those who have not given particular attention to the subject. As is well known, the head and forefront of the attempt to assail human freedom in its most vital spot is, and for many years has been, one Anthony Comstock, who draws a fat salary as secretary of the "Society for the Suppression of Vice." There are undoubtedly sincere individuals among the members of this somewhat misguided organization; but the entire public record of the man Comstock precludes his classification in their category. So utterly without standing is this arch inquisitor among those who know him best, that when he was publicly pointed out, two or three years ago, as "Anthony Comstock, the notorious blackmailer, who never did an honest day's work in his life," a jury assessed his wounded reputation at just six cents; and not even the costs were scored up to his "slanderer."

Not to dwell further on an exceedingly repulsive personality, much light is thrown on DISCONTENT's present fight for free speech, by an examination of the law under which the prosecution is conducted, and the history of its workings in former cases. Reserving the latter subject for future issues of DISCONTENT, it is worth while at present to devote a little attention to the law itself. This measure, commonly known as "the Comstock law," after its chief instigator, is plausible in its wording, and seemingly directed against the vendors of "obscene literature;" but its real purpose, as constantly exemplified in its workings, has from the start been to furnish a weapon by which radical thought of every description might be crushed, and the constitutional guarantees of free speech and a free press completely nullified. This aim was too damnable to be openly avowed, when the legislation was first sought; but in 1878, when the law had been five years in force, its promoters had gained sufficient courage to throw off the mask, and avow their monstrous design of censoring the mails so as to prevent the circulation of any ideas in conflict with their own narrow creeds. This unblushing confession and boast of treasonable criminality and dastardly conspiracy against the liberties of the people was made at the public annual meeting of Comstock's society, on January 28 of that year, in the following significant language:

"Another class of publications issued by Freelothers and Freethinkers is in a fair way of being stamped out. The public can scarcely be aware of the extent that blasphemy and filth, commingled, have found vent through these varied channels. Under a plausible pretense, men who raise a howl about 'free press,' 'free speech,' etc., ruthlessly

trample underfoot the most sacred things, breaking down the altars of religion, bursting asunder the ties of home, and seeking to overthrow every social restraint."

Notice these words carefully, in order to detect their animus. You will observe that the pretext of "lewd and lascivious pictures and writings, which tend to corrupt the morals of the young," is completely discarded, as a lie no longer needful, now that their ends have been served by it; and that these renescent Torquemadas insolently announce the real object of attack to be all men and women who have the temerity to think for themselves, and who presume to reject orthodox ideas. Observe, too, that it is not only Free Love publications that are to be "stamped out." Free Thought papers also come under the ban of those who would chain all thought to the chariot wheels of medievalism. Those who reject orthodox religion are guilty of "blasphemy," and must be suppressed—and this in a country which professes religious freedom and the absolute separation of church and state. Behold the ulterior purpose of Comstockism! The attack on sex radicals is not sufficiently honest to be dignified with the name of bigotry. It is sheer hypocrisy of the foulest type. The talk of "protecting the morals of the people" (poor weak things, who cannot be trusted to select their own reading matter!) is a shameless falsehood. It is simply the entering wedge to secure an unquestioned control of the mails, and to lull the people to sleep, while their liberties are being stolen from them. The fundamental plan of Comstockism, delayed in its execution only because the people are not yet sufficiently drugged to endure such a villainy, is to force an iron religious yoke on the necks of the men and women of America. Unless the present assaults on free speech are met with the most determined resistance, blows which it will be difficult to parry will be directed against those who are "breaking down the altars of religion." Liberals who wink at the encroachments of Comstockism, do so at their own peril, and are whetting the knife for their own throats.

The Comstock law was enacted by the congress of 1873—the same congress that demonetized silver; that was guilty of the Credit Mobilier frauds; and that, for its venality and corruptibility during the entire course of its session, stands branded with undying infamy, above all other congresses, before and since. Such a session was a fit birthplace for such a monster. The facts concerning this law and the congress which enacted it are exceedingly well set forth in an article published as a supplement to Lucifer, some years ago. From this article, I quote as follows:

"Probably no law that ever was enacted has contributed more to bring the whole body of the law into contempt and disrepute than the infamous law which is known as the Comstock or blackmail

law. To those who try to find some good in the motives or purposes of those who procured its enactment, the emphatic answer is that there is no good in it. No honest prosecution has ever taken place under this law. No case can be pointed to of a conviction under this law which has been honestly prosecuted for an honest purpose. Nor can it be shown that any punishment inflicted under this law has ever had the effect of making the victim or the community any purer or better. This law, as will be seen by the statute book, was passed March 3, 1873. The readers of the Lightbearer ought to know just what that fact means, and, as they may not readily see what it means, we will tell them. It means that this law was, by trickery and fraud, rushed through in the confusion and uproar of the closing hours of the most corrupt congress ever convened in this country. It was passed without debate between 1 and 2 o'clock on Sunday morning, March 2, and signed by the president Monday night, with no thought or deliberation on the part of anybody, amid a vast number of bills of all sorts. One of the individuals interested in pushing this vile law through this debauched congress was Comstock himself, of whom it is not necessary here to say anything. Another was a person who violated the law himself, and, through his money or personal influence, managed to escape prosecution and go scot free. And there were others of morals equally eccentric whose trickery aided in the passage of this law. It will be well to reprint what some of the leading papers said at that time of the scenes of confusion and debauchery amid which this bill came into existence."

[Similar testimony, it may be added, is borne by nearly the whole contemporary press of the country, irrespective of party.]

Says the New York Herald of March 2, 1873:

"The Credit Mobilier Congress was busy up to a late hour this morning preparatory to giving up a life that goes out in the blackness of infamy tomorrow. . . . Senators . . . were occupied in voting on appropriation bills, the jobbery and robbery of which cannot be discovered in the hurry of the closing hours of legislation and which sometimes remain forever secret from all except the interested parties. In the house of representatives the bustle and excitement were even greater than in the senate, and, no doubt, amid the confusion, and under the cloak of affected patriotism and honesty, the usual amount of eleventh-hour stealing was accomplished."

And again on March 3:

"What remains of the foul work of this memorable session will probably be finished today."

The Sun says, editorially, March 4:

"Is there any corruption which congress will not justify or approve, any infamy which either house will not boldly adopt as its own? And is there any limit to this process of public and official degradation? The indignation of the people alone can afford an adequate solution of this problem."

And again on March 5:

"Within the last 150 years there have been more famous legislative bodies than this, but we do not remember one more infamous. There were conscientious gentlemen in the senate and house, but, *prima facie*, the case is against the whole of them, and till the close of the present century membership in that

congress will, in the estimation of the general public, throw upon the incumbent the burden of proving that he was not a dishonest man.

"The entire term of this congress has been characterized by a series of disreputable transactions which have no parallel in our history."

"This is the congress which some Macaulay of the next century will describe as more infamous than that parliament which originated Law's celebrated Mississippi scheme, and more corrupt than those parliaments which Walpole used to purchase as he bought merino sheep and Flanders mares to stock his estates in Sussex."

The Tribune, March 4, in an editorial, says:

"The whole congress has been characterized by an unprecedented neglect of the public business in the early stages of the session and confusion at the close."

"The senate has been obstructive, partisan and unusually corrupt. Considering the relative smallness of its numbers, it has been conspicuously bad in morals."

The Times, March 3, bears this testimony:

"No one who reads even the comparatively brief reports of the Associated Press can fail to see the haste and confusion which prevail during the closing hours of congress. It is idle to deny that this condition of things gives rise to many opportunities for fraud, and that some of these opportunities are used is only too probable. But if congress were composed, in both branches, of perfectly immaculate men it would be impossible to avoid great injury to the public interests under the existing method of doing business. The bills which are crowded at the last are precisely those which it is most desirable should be deliberately considered, and the true scope and effect of which it is least possible to penetrate by hurried examination."

And by such a Congress as this, discredited, despised, dishonored, was the real "crime of 1873" perpetrated, in the shape of this rascally piece of legislation, smuggled through as a deed of shame, which aims its poisoned shaft straight at the heart of those liberties which are dearest to every true American. As evidence that even among conservatives were to be found those who were not slow in discovering the pernicious effects of this despicable law, may be cited the following editorial from the New York Methodist of Feb. 12, 1876:

"In taking charge of the mail matter the government cannot undertake to be in any sense responsible for what goes through the mails. Seducers, thieves and murderers use the mails to deceive, plot and ruin. Every day the government, according to the logic of some people, helps to corrupt women, break into banks, and take human life. For messages that produce these results are constantly delivered by postmasters. Any checks that are consistent with liberty we should earnestly favor; but we should not reason that the smallest responsibility attaches to the government for sins committed by the use of a free office."

"The power that is asked for is certain to be abused. We remember when

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PUBLISHED WEEKLY AT HOME, WASH., BY  
DISCONTENT PUBLISHING GROUP.

50 CENTS A YEAR

Address all communications and make  
all money orders payable to DISCON-  
TENT, Home, Pierce County, Wash.

## OFF AND ON.

The attempt to class society as an organism, subject to the laws that govern the individual organism, is ingenious, although by no means new; and, in my opinion, the position is not strictly tenable. Herbert Spencer, in my judgment, expresses the correct view, when he concludes, after a careful examination of the whole subject, that society is not a true organism, although it presents many analogies with one. The analogies are palpable. Let us glance at some of the differences.

As human society is the latest, most complex and best developed product of evolution, it must, if an organism at all, be the highest and most perfect of existing organisms. But it is noticeable in organic life, that the higher the organism, the more fully developed and dominant is the central consciousness; and the more do the cells tend to become effaced as individualities, and to become totally merged in the organism itself. If they once turn "Individualists," as Mr. Chavannes would have the "social cells" do, it is all up with the organism.

Again, the definite, coherent localization of function, most strongly marked in the highest organisms, is but loosely paralleled in society, if indeed it may be said to be even approximated. The tendency toward liberty, and away from centralized authority, is characteristic of all highly progressive civilized life. In other words, the tendency of society is directly away from that which constitutes a perfect organism. Its "cells" are not true cells; and their interdependence in certain respects only renders their independence in other matters the more striking. Government is an evolutionary product, like war and slavery, but no more a permanent social necessity than either of these barbarisms. If there is a social organism, it must consist of the whole human race, and not of any artificial national organization. As for government encouraging individuality, "when more intelligently directed," I fear this will always prove the delusive dream that it has shown itself to be in the past; inasmuch as no process has yet been pointed out for securing more intelligent direction, or for transmuting individual ignorance into collective intelligence by the alchemy of the ballot-box.

To me, it would make comparatively little difference whether I were known as an Anarchist, an Individualist, a Libertarian, an Anticrat, a Pantarchian or anything else of the sort, provided my actual position were clear in the mind of the user of the term. That the name Anarchist has a definite historical connection, linking the propagandist of today with his brothers of the past, is a valid reason for its retention in use. Mr. Chavannes is singularly inaccurate, when he states that an Anarchist de-

sires to "force his opinion" on others. That would be proselytism, rather than propaganda. The Anarchist believes that he has learned a truth of supreme importance to the welfare and happiness of himself and his fellows. This he seeks to make known as widely as possible, that it may be brought to the test of reason and experience. It is unjust, almost to the limit of caricature, to say that "the Anarchist NEVER seeks to develop his own individuality." He is all the time strenuously endeavoring to do this very thing, and ceaselessly strives for freer conditions, to aid him in accomplishing that end.

It would seem, from the description given by Mr. Chavannes, that an Individualist is one who never thinks of anybody nor cares for anybody except himself—and this although, according to the same authority, he is simply a cell in the "social organism." He is a propagandist without a propaganda, a progressivist who is content to hunt a "soft snap" for himself under existing conditions, without recking how hardly these conditions bear on other men. I fail to discern the theoretic or practical superiority of this position. The maintenance of an active propaganda in behalf of more just and favorable conditions is in no way inconsistent with the cultivation of the largest individuality attainable within our present surroundings.

To Comrade Van Ornum I would say that I am not, and never have been, an advocate of "physical force." To predict a revolution, is not to desire it; and to justify self defence, is not to endorse violent aggression. I foresee the probability of a terrific clash at some time in the future; but I am entirely opposed to precipitating it, and doubt if, in itself, it can do any good at all. I agree that the ideally "better way" is one of peace, and that the rabid denunciation of individuals tends to alienate, rather than to win support; but a clear pointing out of the defects in the present order of things appears to me a needful preliminary to the building up of a new order. "Discontent is the mother of progress." I did not "overlook the fact" that our comrade has "urged a very positive method of action along very definite lines." But neither his plan nor any other can possibly be carried out, without awakening the people to a realization that a change is necessary. Without criticism, and sometimes very serious criticism, this cannot be done. The denial of the legitimacy of criticism would certainly lead, in strict logic, to "absolute quiescence," and would thus necessarily "abrogate the whole Anarchist propaganda, and indeed all progress."

To class Kropotkin as an apostle of hate is most unjust to that great-souled lover of his kind. No comparison between two such separate personalities as those of Kropotkin and Tolstoi can prove much as to the respective values of their different methods. Tolstoi is read by thousands, merely for his literary qualities, which made him famous before he ever developed any radicalism. He and Kropotkin are both great and noble workers for human progress; and it is not necessary to belittle either, in order to exalt the other.

I cited the Massachusetts bill, as evi-

dence that the charge of "medical monopoly" was not altogether unfounded. I am not, like "Image Breaker" and a few other extremists, "agin the doctors" through thick and thin, but simply point out, what Comrade James seems insufficiently to recognize, that commercialism has a tendency to lure many of them from the high ground of scientific principle. "Irregulars" are not all to be lumped together and classed with "the firebug," but only those who dogmatize, and make claims they are unable to fulfil—a practice to be equally reprehended when pursued by regulars.

Comrade James writes of Malthus as the orthodox Christian does of the Bible. "The old book has withstood so many infidel assaults that it must be infallible." The multiplication table is not to be impeached; but the population question includes more than mathematics. Without entering into the calculation, I will assume that Comrade James is correct in his estimate of the possible increase of the race, if it set itself to propagate as rapidly as possible. But this is precisely what never occurs. There is always a certain measure of "continence," prompted by more potent motives than any conscious purpose of restricting population. As social conditions become better, the birth rate declines. Or, to put the case otherwise, excessive propagation and the "positive checks" of war, pestilence and famine stand to each other, not in the relation of cause and effect, but in that of joint effects of a common cause. The establishment of normal social conditions would strike at the root of both evils.

I have no love for Roosevelt, and regard his military and imperialistic policies with the utmost conceivable abhorrence. But I believe in justice, even to an enemy; and his act in receiving Booker T. Washington as a family guest, in the very teeth of a vulgar and senseless race prejudice, ought to receive the commendation of every Liberal. It would be a godsend, if the example should have the effect of putting an end to the discrimination against a man on account of the color of his skin.

And now the ministers of Denver are after the Vampyre, an iconoclastic monthly of that city, which has been giving them some hard rubs. The holy men display their Christian charity by seeking to throw the presumptuous editor into prison. By this outrageous persecution, they confess their guilt, and brand themselves with a deeper stain than any criticism could place on them.

By the time this issue reaches its readers, I suppose Czolgosz will have paid the penalty of his deed. Murder must follow murder, according to the code, though not according to real justice and the higher principles of humanity. Meanwhile, the true cause of both murders—the assassination of McKinley by Czolgosz and the assassination of Czolgosz by the State—and of thousands of less conspicuous murders every year, remains untouched, and only pointed out by a few Anarchists and Socialists. The great American public has glutted its lust for blood, and is content.

For Czolgosz, what can and should be said? As an Anarchist, I have repeatedly denied that his act finds any justi-

fication in our philosophy. As a man, I have a limitless aversion to his deed, as to all taking of human life, save in strict self defence. Nevertheless, I cannot refuse to Czolgosz the suffering human being, not Czolgosz the assassin, the same sympathy I sincerely extended to McKinley the dying man, not McKinley the president, nor McKinley the author of the iniquitous Philippine war. Both of them, justly or condemn their acts as you please, were tempest-tossed shells on the billows of human life, driven by overmastering causes, within and without, to sudden and fatal wreckage on the shores of unavoidable destiny.

From the best evidence yet attainable, uncertain and in part unreliable as this admittedly is, Czolgosz was probably not an Anarchist. The accounts given of his sayings and doings since the tragedy, unless false from beginning to end, indicate that he was of unbalanced mind, a prey to emotional excitement. The damning environment of commercialism threw his sensitive nature off its balance, and impelled him to his desperate deed.

Pity for both McKinley and Czolgosz, alike blind victims of conditions which mock the fancied free agency of the individual! Pity for the martyred workmen of Chicago, Homestead, Lattimer, Virden, Wardner! Pity for the living wageslaves, wearing out their existence in the grinding treadmill of our mis-called civilization! Pity even for those most wretched slaves, the poor hirelings of press and pulpit, who are forced to strangle the truth, in order to gain the material comforts of life! Pity unbounded for the deluded masses, who are ready to kiss the hand that throttles them, and to tear their best friends, at the bidding of their worst enemies! In love and pity for all our fellow victims, and with minds freed as far as possible from personal hate toward any individuals, let us renew our efforts to saturate men's minds with a principle which must lead, in the fulness of time, to the bringing in of a free society, and the evanishment of the social wrongs of today.

The imprisonment of John Most for a year, for having reprinted a fifty-year old editorial of Karl Heinzen, adds one more to the current acts of persecution. The count is already a long one, and is by no means ended.

The persecution of a whole family, on account of one of its members, is an atrocious piece of injustice, fit only for the lowest savages. Edwin Booth was not driven from the stage because Wilkes Booth assassinated Lincoln. Yet all the relatives of Czolgosz are remorselessly pursued, hounded out of employment and threatened with starvation, by the "good people" who are ready to commit crime, in order to show their horror of crime. It is a sad picture of modern civilization.

F. Ciancibilla, editor of *l'Aurora*, although convicted of no offence, and accused only of comments on the assassination which were indiscreet, but not in any sense an incitement to violence, is held in jail, because he cannot give bail to the exorbitant amount of \$5000. He is likely to be acquitted in the end; but the present outrage and the trouble thereby caused are none the less.

JAMES F. MORTON, JR.



## A WORD WITH BROTHER MORTON.

Speaking of the comparative immaturity of Tolstoi in Russia you say:

"The extreme revolutionist might retort that this very fact proved that Russian tyranny saw that it had nothing to fear from the application of Tolstoi's theories, and that he was not really their enemy."

It is true that the "extreme revolutionist" might make this retort; but he would not be likely to, because it would be so manifestly wrong. Tolstoi's teachings regarding military service strike directly at the military power of the czar; and to assume that the Russian government sees "nothing in it to fear," is to close one's eyes to all the probabilities of the case. It doesn't give the Russian officials credit for common sense. A more rational conclusion would be that the Russian authorities were unable to find an adequate method of dealing with him without losing their own hold upon the people.

Nor is Kropotkin any more "a man for the whole world" than Tolstoi. In fact, as I before pointed out, Tolstoi's works are read all over the civilized world a hundred times more than those of Kropotkin. And as for the permanence of the respective influence of the two men every student of history, if he will stop and think, will see that love is far more enduring than hate. As a rule, the revolutionists of the world are soon forgotten; whereas the Christs, the St. Francis, and the Savonarolas impress themselves upon all time. I do not say that Kropotkin has not awakened and quickened many hearts into action. I only say, that, judging by the light I have, it seems to me that his work would have been far more effective had he followed less revolutionary methods.

Again, you say, that my position respecting denunciation and condemnation of others, "logically carried out would abrogate the whole Anarchist propaganda, and, indeed, all progress." And then you go on to say that "great social changes are not brought about without effort, by the timely intervention of some mysterious power," as if I had proposed "absolute quiescence," or "mere inaction." How did you come to overlook the fact that all through the series of articles you have published I have urged a very positive method of action along very definite lines? I have only shown the inadequacy of destructive methods, methods which arouse antagonisms and stimulate hatreds; but I have not failed to point out others which have quite the contrary tendency. To my mind it is infinitely more effective to say to a man whom I wish to win, "yes, your way is a good one in some cases; but here is a better one. See how it will work," than it is to denounce him and his ways. As soon as we denounce men, or their ideas, we lose our influence with them and we can do nothing.

In the light of what I have already said, Brother Morton, suppose you look again at your fourth paragraph and see if it "looks like an attempt to reduce Anarchism to a proposition of self-evident absurdity." We don't have to "sit in judgment" on others, "even upon the rulers of the people." What we want is to win people, not to put them down in the argument merely. It is worth a hundred times more to get a

man on our side than it is to put him down, even in a debate. You say that "Anarchy declares war" on aggression; but it doesn't follow that it must be a war of physical force or even of denunciation. If we can find a better way why not use it? These very "age-long wrongs," which we are striving to right, are a part of the evolutionary history of the race, and were, in their own time, right and proper. The only way in which we can right things is by putting something better in their place. The world never destroys one institution until a better has been built and tested. If the old institutions no longer express our ideals it is incumbent on us to evolve something better; and we cannot shirk our responsibility by denouncing those who fail to see things as we do.

W. H. VAN ORNUM.

## ANARCHY VS. INDIVIDUALISM.

I find in DISCONTENT of September 11 an article by Dr. Schellhaus with a short rejoinder by J. F. Morton, Jr., which has set me thinking, and I feel like presenting my thoughts to your readers.

So far as the opinions expressed by Morton in his answer to Schellhaus are concerned I fully agree with him until he says that governments will pass off in the course of evolution, as has been done by cannibalism and slavery. Had he said that the day will come when force would not be needed to enforce government I would have agreed with him; but for me government is one of the needs of organization, and I cannot think of society being able to dispense with it. I fully agree with Morton that today government is very far from encouraging the development of individuals as it might do; but it does not follow that it cannot do it when more intelligently directed.

I look upon the government in society as a continuation of the organization of the cells. As I see it, the cells organize themselves into subordinate organisms; these subordinate organisms organize themselves into egos or individuals; and these individuals organize themselves into families, tribes and nations.

If my position is correct, the nation can no more get along without control than the aggregation of cells can get along without control. If J. F. Morton, Jr., is sufficiently interested in this question to discuss it with me I am willing to meet the arguments he may bring forward to prove that the social organism is not a development of the organization of the cells, subject to the same laws, and that the organization and control of the individual by the majority of the cells does not prove that the social organism must be governed by the majority of individuals of which it is composed.

This question, interesting as it is, is not the only subject on which I desire to express the thoughts which passed through my mind in reading the number of DISCONTENT referred to. That which struck me the most was that the name of Individualists would much better express the position of the members of the Home colony than the names of Anarchists and Freelothers.

As I understand the term, an Individualist is a person who believes that each individual ought to control his or her conduct, not in defiance of its surroundings, or regardless of natural laws, but within the conditions of his surround-

ings, and in obedience to natural laws; while an Anarchist is a person who wants to force his opinion as to the uselessness of governments upon all mankind, going so far as to assassinate the rulers that the people have selected to execute their laws. That is, an Individualist, although he may believe that less government, or no government, would be better for the community, yet accepts the conditions as he finds them, and seeks to develop his own individuality to the best advantage under these conditions; while the Anarchist never seeks to develop his own individuality, but spends all his energies in destroying the conditions.

I find the same difference between Individualists and Freelothers. Freelothers fight marriage in the same spirit as Anarchists fight government; while Individualists apply their principles to the marriage relation; and while they may approve or disapprove of monogamy, they claim for themselves, and grant to others, the right to control their conduct in sexual relations, subject to the conditions of their surroundings and in obedience to natural laws.

There are at this time in the world a great many more Anarchists and Freelothers than there are Individualists, almost all persons believing that conditions must be changed before the Individual can improve; but some opinions expressed in the letters reprinted from the Tacoma News were such as are held by Individualists, and not in accord with the desire for propaganda, found among Anarchists and Freelothers.

I sincerely hope that these letters expressed the true feeling which reigns at Home, and that your colony will, in time, come to be known, not as the gathering place of discontented people, who have soured upon the world, but as a happy home, where each individual enjoys all the freedom of action possible under present conditions, and at the same time cultivates the most friendly relations, not only among themselves, but with the rest of the world.

ALBERT CHAYANNES.

## DIVERS COMMENTS.

How is "the James family" divided against itself? I may safely challenge evidence that I should have favored the medical regulation bill which my namesake of Harvard opposed or any other regulation bill of any kind, except a bill to repeal regulations. That is no reason why I should not pronounce an untaught experimenter on the lives of patients, who pay him for alleged professional services, just as much a criminal as the fellow who commits arson to get an insurance; or why I should any less caution Anarchists, as such, to boycott him than the firebug.

The comrade who says I have implicit faith in the innerness of the regular school of medicine can scarcely have read my articles on the subject; nor does it look much like having read and understood them to class regular medicine with the "regular schools" of theology, finance, or commerce. My contention all along has been that the regular physician is a man of science; that as such he knows he does not know much; that, accordingly, he is an experimenter—a vivisector—and a consulter of records, in just which the reg-

ularity attributed to his school consists; while the quack knows it all—like the theologian, though he has never experimented on anything but his own patients and knows nothing about medical history. Must I repeat that the true physician is perfectly willing to learn from osteopathy, hydrotherapy, etc., all they can prove (which is his business, though not mine); in other words, that the one thing about them he never can adopt is their dogmatism, which means their quackery?

The "coalition" of allopathy, homeopathy, and eclecticism simply proves what an Anarchist might be rather loath to acknowledge, if he did not reflect that there is no use in lying after election. It proves that the law, though, of course, absurd enough, is not, at all points, quite so absurd as some Anarchists (and others) have a vague idea it is. The homeopaths and eclectics became legally qualified practitioners only lately, through the rapid growth of their schools, says Comrade Morton. Yes, and I can tell him just when they became so. When "the rapid growth of their schools" reached the point of having institutions from which they could send out students capable of passing examination in the positive sciences—atomy, physiology, chemistry, etc., which underlie medical practice, it was no longer in the power, perhaps not the wish, of regular physicians to deny that they were qualified educationally, and should be legally, though their one-sided theories do savor of quackery. When osteopaths go and do likewise, the "coalition" is open to them, as one of my opponents has actually proved. But a method which does not involve education in the facts wherein medicine consists, has no claim to be called a medical school.

I am very loath to make as many "last appearances in a favorite role" as Clara Morris; but what can I do, when the audience will encore? And what "new argument" can I add to this, that the observed increase of the human race, where least checked, either by continence or premature death, would, not in geologic aeons, but in less than thirteen centuries, pack the earth, seas and all, with the progeny of one Eve and Adam, as tight as sardines in a box; which result being evidently impossible of realization, it follows that, unless continence interfere to check the increase, premature mortality will? I do not aspire to improve the multiplication table. I have to take it as it is.

I will inform Comrade Byington that I have read "Progress and Poverty," and it entirely convinced me—that Henry George did not understand Malthus. "Mutato nomine, de te fabula narratur," whosoever thou art that undertakes to refute Malthus? It is now 103 years since Malthus published his famous essay, during all which time refutations have fairly rained. That they don't stop raining is alone proof enough he cannot be refuted. Let the dove and olive branch come in now!

C. L. JAMES.

A man must consider what a blind man's buff is this game of conformity—Emerson.



# THE COMSTOCK LAW.

Continued from page 1.

southern postmasters refused to deliver the Tribune to subscribers, on the ground that it was "incendiary matter." Nobody needs to be told that, in any political campaign, any political party having control of the post offices would use its power to hinder the other party; that the sacredness of private letters would be subject to the needs of partisans and the whims of ignorant or rabid postmasters. An inspected mailbag is the sign of the vilest despotism. That thing became so vulgarly shameless in Italy that TRAVELERS WERE UNBLUSHINGLY TOLD THE OFFICE HAD NOT YET READ THEIR LETTERS!

"The evil must be reached in other ways. Liberty has evils of its own; but it is worth a hundred fold more than the best despotism. The people who would like to suppress sin by main force believe that they would suppress only sin. Pius IX believed that he suppressed only sin when ruling the most vicious and ignorant population in the Italian peninsula. Despotism may mean well in its sources; it becomes wicked and corrupt long before it reaches the masses under it. You must meet in CHIEFLY by moral and religious restraint; a little can be done by a free country through its laws; and that little we shall always favor. BUT WE ARE NOT WILLING TO SACRIFICE, OR EVEN PUT IN PERIL, A FREE CORRESPONDENCE AND A FREE PRESS FOR ANY PURPOSE."

Despite all protests, however, the Comstock law remains in full force, as an engine for the destruction of American liberty. The prosecutions—or rather persecutions—of Bennett, Heywood, Harman, Berrier, Ruedebusch, Pope and so many more have now been followed by the present sneaking attempt to suppress DISCONTENT, through the arrest of Larkin, Govan and Adams—the three men presumed by the enemy to be the backbone of the paper. The straightforward discussion of social questions, in language that could be repeated anywhere without offending the chastest ear, forms the sole basis of the indictment against them. This case goes farther than most of those that have preceded it, in that it involves a direct and clear-cut denial of the right of American citizens to formulate and express their honest convictions. There is no escape from the issue. What say the Liberals of the country? What say you? Shall the dastardly reactionists be suffered to perfect their foul design of destroying the last vestiges of a free press in this country? To the winds with differences of opinion at such a time! Fight DISCONTENT's ideas as violently as you please; but stand by its representatives in their battle for the liberty of all. Funds are badly needed, to carry on the work of defence. All contributions should be sent to Oliver A. Verity, Home, Wash., treasurer of the defence committee. Now is the time to act, and to keep acting, up to the trial next February. Will Liberals rise to the occasion, and strike the imperialistic censorship a blow from which it will be slow to recover?

JAMES F. MORTON, JR.

The spirit of interference with the press, as manifested within the last two or three years, on the part of the general government is unrepugnant, undemocratic, unpardonable, and cannot be too severely condemned. There is no occasion for congress to resort to the weapons of despots in order to save itself from criticism, the government from reproach, or the people from dangerous encroachments upon their private rights or moral sensibilities.—Washington Post.

## HOME NEWS.

Edna Stocker was a guest at the Verity home for two days this week.

F. Eccleston, from Cambridge, Mass., who is now staying in Seattle, paid us a flying visit on Sunday.

The fall rains have set in; but they are interspersed by many pleasant days; and the weather is extremely mild.

L. F. Austin, a recent member of Equality Colony, and former editor of Industrial Freedom, spent several days with us this week.

Saturday evening, the 2d inst., was the occasion of a very pleasant gathering to dedicate the new print shop which has just been completed. Most of the Home people, and many of the neighbors, assembled in the neat little building which will be the future home of DISCONTENT. O. A. Verity spoke the word of welcome, giving a brief history of the work of DISCONTENT from the beginning of its publication to the present time. The remainder of the evening was given up to dancing, much to the enjoyment of the young people, from 72 down.

The land owned by the Mutual Home Association is located on Von Geldern Cove (known locally as Joes Bay), an arm of Carrs Inlet, and is 13 miles west from Tacoma on an air line, but the steamer route is about 20 miles.

The association is simply a land-holding institution, and can take no part in the starting of an industry. All industries are inaugurated by the members interested and those willing to help them. Streets are not opened yet and we have no sidewalks. Those thinking of coming here must expect to work, as it is not an easy task to clear this land and get it in condition for cultivation. There are 87 people here—24 men, 23 women and 40 children—girls over 15 years 4, boys 3. We are not living communistic, but there is not anything in our articles of incorporation and agreement to prohibit any number of persons from living in that manner if they desire to do so. Those writing for information will please inclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope for reply.

## MANHATTAN LIBERAL CLUB.

The Manhattan Liberal Club is doing good work for the cause of Liberalism. The following are the dates of its meetings for the rest of the current month: Friday, November 15: "The Real Danger of Government by Injunction." John Brooks Leavitt.

Friday, November 22: "Aristocracy and Democracy." Henry George, Jr.

Friday, November 29: "Bradlaugh and Ingersoll." Henry Rowley.

Place of meeting, German Masonic Temple, 220 East Fifteenth street, New York City.

## RECEIPTS.

Slocum \$1, Poppers 50c, Martina 50c, Swayne 10c.

"Your medicine has helped me wonderfully," she wrote to the patent medicine house. "Three weeks ago I could not spank the baby and now I am able to thrash my husband. God bless you!"—Smart Set.

## BOOKS AND PAMPHLETS FOR SALE BY DISCONTENT

|  |      |
|--|------|
| Perfect Motherhood. Lois Waisbrooker.  | 1 00 |
| Irene or the Road to Freedom. Sada Bailey Fowler.  | 1 00 |
| Business Without Money. W. H. Van Ornum.   | 50   |
| Helen Harlow's Vow. Lois Waisbrooker.  | 25   |
| God and the State. By Michael Bakunin.   | 05   |
| Moribund Society and Anarchy. By Jean Grave.   | 25   |
| Anarchy. By Enrico Malatesta. Is It All a Dream? By Jas. F. Morton, Jr.  | 10   |
| God and Government: The Siamese Twins of Superstition. W. E. Nevill.   | 05   |
| The Chicago Martyrs; The Famous Speeches of the Eight Anarchists in Judge Gary's Court, and Altgeld's Reasons for Pardoning Fielden, Neebe and Schwab. | 25   |
| Five Propaganda Leaflets on the Sex Question.  | 10   |
| Personal Rights and Sexual Wrongs What the Young Need to Know. E. C. Walker  | 30   |
| The Revival of Puritanism. E. C. Walker  | 10   |
| Appeal to the Young. Kropotkin.  | 05   |
| Mating or Marrying, Which? W. H. Van Ornum.  | 05   |
| The Evolution of the Family. Jonathan Mayo Crane.  | 05   |
| Love in Freedom. Moses Harman.   | 05   |
| The Evolution of Modesty. Jonathan Mayo Crane.   | 05   |
| The Regeneration of Society. Lillian Harman.   | 05   |
| Motherhood in Freedom. Moses Harman.   | 05   |
| Institutional Marriage. M. Harman.   | 05   |
| A Tale of the Strassburg Geese.  | 05   |
| The Coming Woman. Lillie D. White.   | 05   |
| Plain Words on the Woman Question. Grant Allen. With remarks by E. C. Walker.  | 05   |
| Variety vs. Monogamy. E. C. Walker   | 05   |
| Marriage and Morality. Lillian Harman.   | 05   |

## OUR WORSHIP OF PRIMITIVE SOCIAL GUESSES

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No man is wise enough to foresee the secondary results of any proposed restriction, and no history is copious enough to record the evils that have ensued upon denials of liberty.—George E. MacDonald.

### CONTENTS:

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Appendix: Anthropology and Monogamy; Love and Trust versus Fear; Reflections upon reading William Platt's "Women, Love and Life."

Price, 15 cents. For sale by DISCONTENT.

## THE NEW HEDONISM.

BY GRANT ALLEN.

Grant Allen needs no introduction to reading, thinking men and women. Man of science, a writer of charming expository and imaginative prose, he was, perhaps, at his best when bravely leading on, as in this brilliant brochure, in the fight against degrading religious and moral superstitions and time-sacred wrongs. No brief description can tell you what this splendid little work embraces no short excerpts can satisfy you. Price 5 cents.

FOR SALE BY DISCONTENT.

### MEETING.

The Independent Debating Club meets every Sunday at 2 p. m., at 909 Market street, San Francisco, Calif. Free discussion. Public invited.



Contains a full, plain, and easy reading treatise on "Health and Disease, with Recipes," all the average reader can profitably learn of personal hygiene and common diseases (including special, separate chapters for men and women); all right up-to-date, and fully illustrated with hundreds of photo-engravings and chromo-lithographs. Contains also the already popular "Plain Home Talk" about the relations of the sexes and social customs in all ages and all countries, with "original and startling" suggestions for social reforms; newly revised, enlarged, and well illustrated. All is "heart to heart" plain home talk from a clear thinking, plain speaking, liberal minded medical author of over forty years' experience. Nearly 1,000,000 of his former books sold. A curious book for curious people, and a sensible book for everyone. Answers 1001 delicate questions one would like to ask his regular physician and yet doesn't want to. 1248 pages, 400 illustrations (80 in colors), 250 recipes. Price, clothbound, \$2, mailed, 240 SAMPLE PAGES, including two full chapters, in handsome "Flashlight" cover, mailed for 6 cents postage.

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## Articles of Incorporation and Agreement of the Mutual Home Association.

Be it remembered, that on this 17th day of January, 1898, we, the undersigned, have associated ourselves together for the purpose of forming a corporation under the laws of the State of Washington.

That the name of the corporation shall be The Mutual Home Association.

The purpose of the association is to assist its members in obtaining and building homes for themselves and to aid in establishing better social and moral conditions.

The location of this corporation shall be at Home, located on Joes Bay, Pierce County, State of Washington; and this association may establish in other places in this state branches of the same where two or more persons may wish to locate.

Any person may become a member of this association by paying into the treasury a sum equal to the cost of the land he or she may select, and one dollar for a certificate, and subscribing to this agreement.

The affairs of this association shall be conducted by a board of trustees, elected as may be provided for by the by-laws.

A certificate of membership shall entitle the legal holder to the use and occupancy of not less than one acre of land nor more than two (less all public streets) upon payment annually into the treasury of the association a sum equal to the taxes assessed against the tract of land he or she may hold.

All money received from memberships shall be used only for the purpose of purchasing land. The real estate of this association shall never be sold, mortgaged or disposed of. A unanimous vote of all members of this association shall be required to change these articles of incorporation.

No officer, or other person, shall ever be empowered to contract any debt in the name of this association.

All certificates of membership shall be for life.

Upon the death of any member a certificate of membership shall be issued covering the land described in certificate of membership of deceased:

First: To person named in will or bequest.  
Second: Wife or husband.  
Third: Children of deceased; if there is more than one child they must decide for themselves.

All improvements upon land covered by certificate of membership shall be personal property, and the association as such has no claim thereto.

Any member has the right of choice of any land not already chosen or set aside for a special purpose.

**CERTIFICATE OF MEMBERSHIP.**  
This is to certify that has subscribed to the articles of incorporation and agreement and paid into the treasury of The Mutual Home Association the sum of . . . dollars, which entitles . . . to the use and occupancy for life of lot . . . block . . . as platted by the association, upon complying with the articles of agreement.

SEND 10 CENTS for specimens of 10 liberal papers and 10 tracts, circulars and sample of stocking yarn, or 3 cents for a copy of "Little Freethinker." Elmina Drake Slenker, Snowville, Va.